

Are you ready for the Digital Television Revolution?

February 17, 2009, All American Television Channels will be Digital... What You Need to Know to be Prepared

If you subscribe to digital TV services offered by cable or telephone companies, you don't need to do anything because the companies already have the technology in place to broadcast the new digital format. However, if you are not a cable subscriber and do not wish to pay hundreds of dollars for a new digital television, the following information may help take the mystery out of the "Digital Television Revolution."

What is Digital Television (DTV) and why are American Television Stations switching to this Technology?

On **February 17, 2009**, the U.S. government is requiring all American television stations to stop offering "free" analog channels and switch to digital format. According to the industry, digital television is a more efficient way to broadcast by providing clearer picture and sound quality, as well as offering consumers many more channels.

In addition, in this post-9/11 era, the switch to an all digital format will free up airwaves to make them available more readily to first-responders, such as local police and fire departments, thereby enhancing their reaction to emergencies and significantly improving public safety for all Americans.

What do I need to do to prepare for the DTV Transition?

First, you need to take an inventory of all the functioning television sets in your home to see which ones are connected to cable and those that use an antenna. The televisions that are currently using antennas are probably "analog" and will be unable to receive television signals once digital broadcasting begins **February 17, 2009**.

After February 17, 2009, will I be able to use my analog television set?

There are three options for consumers who will still use analog television sets:

- **Purchase a DTV converter box:** Television viewers, who wish to still get "free" TV, must have a digital converter box. Beginning in early 2008, consumers will be able to purchase DTV converter boxes at an estimated (one time) cost of \$50 to \$70 from your local electronic retailer.
- **Purchase a Digital TV set:** Although some may think of "plasma" or "LCD" television when they think about digital, those are simply types of high-definition televisions. For this conversion you will need a TV set with a built-in digital tuner. Most TV sets purchased since 2004, should have the built-in digital tuner. To learn more about digital televisions, and how to find the one that will best fit your needs, visit <http://www.myceknowhow.com/digitalTelevision.cfm>

- **Subscribe to a digital Television provider:** You can continue to use your analog television without a DTV converter box by subscribing to a cable, satellite, or telephone company video service?

What will happen if I don't get the converter box, purchase a new TV or get cable; will I still be able to watch television?

No. Once the Digital Television Transition takes place, you will no longer be able to view broadcast television signals, unless you are using a converter box or subscribe to a cable or satellite provider.

What if I can't afford to buy a converter box?

In an effort to offset the cost, the federal government will provide up to two \$40 coupons per household towards the purchase price. For more information on the Digital-to-Analog Converter Box Coupon Program, visit the NTIA's website at www.ntia.doc.gov/dtvcoupon, or call 1-888-388-2009 (voice) or 1-877-530-2634 (TTY).

For additional information regarding the Digital Television Transition, visit <http://www.DigitalTips.org> and www.DTVtransition.org.

Information courtesy of the Office of Consumer Counsel, District of Columbia.